DAWN AND EVENING

AN ADVENTURE OF SENOR PUG

By Mildred Cram

Illustrated by F. C. Yohn.

RAT A TAT-TAT! Pug woke with a start and sat up in bed. Just for an instant he thought: "This is New York. That's old Compton at the door. I must be late for breakfast." Then he realized that he was occupying the spare bedroom of the American consulate at Magella. It was pitch dark and some one was pounding at the door.

Rat a tat-tat!

"Who is it?"

The door opened, a shaft of light fell across the stone floor, and Pug saw the consul's troubled face.

"Sorry to disturb you," he said. "It's 3 o'clock, and I've just been awakened out of a sound sleep by a squad of Diego's soldiers. They have been ringing the bell for twenty minutes. It seems that they want you."

"Me?"

"Carlo Gonelli is going to be shot at dawn. As a matter of courtesy you're invited to the execution. I thought I'd better tell you."

Pug shouted and leaped out of bed. He danced a bit when his bare feet touched the floor. "Where's my coat? Great Scott, Gonelli mustn't be shot."

The consul smiled rather wearily and sat down on the edge of Pug's bed, dangling his feet clear of the cold floor.

"Yesterday," he said, "Gonelli was your enemy. You rubbed his impudent nose in the dust. What happened? The Magellans have forgotten all about him. A defeated leader is a dead leader. You can't possibly save him."

"Why?"

"Diego's orders. You may be the political matinee hero of the hour, but Diego commands the firing squad. No, my dear fellow; I advise you to go to the execution and to behave like a gentleman—a Magellan gentleman."

Pug was struggling into his clothes. He tied his tie in a bowknot, thrust his bare feet into a borrowed pair of the consul's bedroom slippers, and grabbed his hat. "Hanged if I'll do anything of the sort," he laughed. He brushed by the astonished consul and took the stairs four at a time.

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THE consul ran nimbly to the door and shouted after him: "I warn you! Remember, I warn you!" But Pug was already in the courtyard. Diego's soldiers were waiting; they saluted, bringing their heels together sharply, with a rattle of swords and spurs. Pug nodded, the consul's Indian boy opened the heavy door, and the brisk funeral party trotted out into the street.

The sky was still patterned with stars, but Pug saw a band of light, very wan and faint, behind the saw-tooth peaks of the Santa Christina. It was the mere ghost of dawn, yet he could fancy the swift coming of the tropic sun, a flaming rocket that would soon illuminate the world. Magella was asleep after the terrors and glories of the night. All the blinds were drawn, the wooden courtyard doors were closed and barred; even the street lights flickered faintly, as if discouraged by the deepening radiance of the east.

"Where to?" Pug asked.

One of Diego's fancy soldiers turned a smiling face. "To the fortress, signore."

Pug felt in the pockets of his white linen coat, found a package of cigarettes, and offered one to the eager little royalist. They paused to share the match that Pug struck against a stone wall, then hurried on again, side by side. Pug asked, casually: "Did they give Carlo Gonelli a fair trial?"

The royalist took a deep breath, blew a cloud of smoke through his nostrils and nodded violently. "Si, signore. They asked him many questions. Was he a nationalist? Yes! Had he sought to bestray his country? He said 'No' to that! So they strung him up by the wrists from the chandelier until he gave them the right answer. They called him traitor and stuck their swords into his side—not far, only to bring the blood. Merciful! We Magellans are losing our courage. I remember——"

"Who signed the order for the execution?"

"President Diego. They woke him up at 2 o'clock, and he signed. Good riddance! We Magellans never follow a coward."

"Was Carlo Gonelli a coward?"

"Si, signore. He had rifles, ammunition, followers who were ready to die for him. What did he do? He surrendered to you—an Americano! Excuse me, Signor Pug—but we Magellans hate Americans, principally because we have no reason to love them. You defeated Gonelli. Very well! We follow you. Until some day you surrender to a stronger man. Then we say ta-ta—good-bye!"

Pug laughed. But his eyes were on the deepening band of light in the east. He had no idea where Diego's men were leading him until they swung sharply around a corner into the Piazza Independenza. Beneath the clipped trees it was very dark and Pug could hear the delicate tinkling of the old Fountain of Abundance—a thin, gossamer sound of drifting spray and high-flung jets of cool water.

He thought: "Gonelli must hate to leave all this! He has no morals to speak of, but he was a good enemy."

They crossed the square and trotted briskly toward the president's palace, a long, adobe building with an ornate facade and a wide door flush with the cobbled street.

The little royalist laughed. "There is no light in President Diego's window. He has forgotten Gonelli already. So much for that nationalist!"

Pug glanced up at the palace. "Where is the president's room?" he asked.

"Over the door, signore."

There was no sign of any one save the solitary sentry dozing near the entrance. Pug clenched his hands. "It's worth taking a chance," he whispered. "I guess I'll try."

He kicked off the consul's bedroom slippers, sending them flying above Diego's soldiers like two scarlet pigeons in full flight. Then he leaped for the cornice of the big doorway, caught it, stuck his bare toes into the ornate carving of the frame, swung himself fup from the balcony to the ledge above, and scrambled through the open window of President Diego's room.

The sentry's rifle went off with an astounding explosion, a futile spattering of bullets against the palace wall.

The room was silent and dark. Pug thought quickly. "There's some one here," and ducked. There was a flash, a roar and an acrid smell of smoke.

"Got you!" a voice cried from the darkness.

"Guess again!" Pug shouted.

Outside the sentry was still peppering the walls, and Diego's soldiers, beside themselves with horror, were pounding on the door. Pug heard a scuffle of feet, a scream; then some one, certainly not more than a foot away, demanded in a tense, furious voice: "Where the devil are you?"

"I'm right here. I'm Signor Pug, at your service. And I want to see Diego."

"Signor Pug?"

A chair turned over with a crash. The unsteady voice whimpered: "I can't find the matches. Dio buono, I can't find the matches!"

"If I light one will you promise not to shoot?"

"You're a fool," the voice said.

"Thanks."

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THE match flared and Pug saw President Diego standing before a high black marble mantel. A tall mirror loomed behind him. Diego was wearing an old-fashioned night shirt, and his thin old legs, very spindle-shanked, were as bare as an urchin's. His heavy crop of white hair was standing erect like a lion's mane, his Cy-ater of Cy-atersville mustaches looked as if they might have been put on hurriedly, askew. He glared at Pug, pointing his revolver straight at the sputtering match. "Before God, Signor Pug," he said, gravely, "I still think you are a fool."

Pug let the match go out. While he fumbled for another he spoke hurriedly, passionately, with all the conviction he could muster: "President Diego, they say Carlo Gonelli is going to be shot at dawn—in a few minutes. I want you to pardon him. After what you promised your people on that balcony tonight—fair play, freedom, democracy, justice—can you permit any man, even your enemy, to be shot without a fair trial? Gonelli is a scoundrel, but he is also intelligent. He would be a useful man in Magella. After all, what did he do? He led a band of cutthroats against the American workmen at Santa Christina because he honestly believed that the mines belong to Magella. It was piracy, and we punished him. President Diego, Magella is going to be taken seriously by the world some day; she's got to have a clean record! You remember what happened not long ago to a nation that went in for firing squads——"

The second match flared, and Pug held it above his head, staring at Diego in the uncertain light. Behind the president some one was pounding at the door. The old man turned quickly, opened the door, and said in an angry voice: "Go away! I am receiving Signor Pug." Then he stalked back to the mantel, snatched up one of the heavy candelsticks that adorned it, and held the wick to Pug's match. Pug saw that his hands were trembling. But Diego, with admirable poise, carried the lighted candle to his bed table, then crawled very nimbly into bed, drawing the silk covers up around his chin with a perceptible shiver. He lay for a moment with his eyes closed, his head strongly silhouetted against the pillows. Then he spoke.

"I am a Magellan. I hate my enemies. Forgiveness is both comic and degrading. It is safer to kill than to trust a nationalist."

Pug grinned. "I'll take the responsibility for Gonelli, Mr. President."

Diego opened his eyes, and Pug saw a gleam of fire and humor in them. "You're a scamp," he said. "Give me that pen over there and a sheet of paper. I make you a present of Carlo Gonelli's life. He is a liar, a thief, the son of seven pigs. Some fine day he will stab you in the back. Now run along. I want to sleep. You might go by way of the door."

Pug glanced at the scrawled pardon, folded it carefully, and went to the window. With one leg across the sill he turned to wave his hand. "No, thanks," he said. "I might miss the sunrise." He heard Diego's snort of impatience, then he dropped to the street. "My shoes! Where the deuce——"

"Here, signore!" The sentry came running out of his box and presented the consul's bedroom slippers with a flourish. "I preserved them for you."

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PUG accepted the shoes gravely, stepped into them and offered the sentry a cigarette. "You're a damn poor shot, Giovanni," he remarked.

The sentry, with a cautious upward look at Diego's window, brought his fingers to his cap. "Viva il Signor Pug!" he said under his breath.

Diego's soldiers trotted briskly away, their swords and spurs rattling. It was dark again, the complete and impenetrable darkness which comes just before dawn. The stars winked out one by one. The air was sweet, inexpressibly fresh; little puffs of damp air came from the harbor across the flat-roofed houses and the tangled gardens. Once there was a whirring of wings and a shrill, fragmentary chorus of birds, as if some feathered traveler from behind the Christina had brought news of the coming of the great round sun. Diego's soldiers threaded a maze of crooked streets, turned at right angles, and came out on the water front, where the broad Esplanade dwindled into a narrow way of wharves, warehouses and railway tracks, the beginning of that half-moon of waste land which dwindles at one tip into the snow-white beaches of Il Capo. Then, suddenly, it was quite light again, as if a great curtain had been lifted in the east. Pug saw a filthy street pitted with mud puddles, dilapidated buildings, infinitely deserted and forlorn. Heaps of rubbish, loot from the American railway stores, still smoldered from the revolutionary conflagrations of the night before, and Pug thought, "What a confounded fool I am, feeling sorry for this fellow! He probably isn't worth saving."

The soldiers broke into a trot, and the littlest one—he of the cigarette—panted cheerfully: "It would be a pity to miss the execution, after so much trouble. The fortress is just ahead there, where you see the high wall."

The sky behind the Santa Christina was aflame now. Against the sudden glory of light the mountains were purple-black, like peaks in a stage setting, cardboard mountains, fantastic and unreal. On the farthermost point of thrusting land the Capo light still burned, a tiny white flame combating the sky's conflagration.

The fortress gate swung open to admit them, and they hurried up a steep ramp to the courtyard. It was a dusty place inclosed by four high walls. Little knots of soldiers lounged in the doorways and a whole row of dejected prisoners, ragged, filthy and haggard, squatted in the dust and quarreled together over the stub of a cigarette.

"This way, signore."

Diego's soldiers ran across the courtyard, plunged through a low door and, threading a maze of passageways, came out on the ramparts of the forthess directly above another and smaller quadrangle.

"Ecco, Signor Pug! The execution."

Pug looked down and saw the firing squad directly beneath him. A sleepy officer gave a command in a stifled voice, and all the rifles were lifted with a precise and ominous rattle. Facing them, an unlighted cigarette in his mouth, his hands clasped behind his back, Carlo Gonelli stood quietly waiting.

Pug pushed Diego's laughing soldiers aside, leaped and landed on his feet about two yards behind Gonelli. "Want a light, Gonelli?" he asked.

The officer shouted, the rifles wavered, and the lounging soldiers in the background, suddenly galvanized into action, howled uproariously. Gonelli turned and met Pug's eyes with a look of concentrated hate and despair.

"Much obliged," he said, in a calm voice.

Pug grinned as he struck the match. "I've got a pardon for you in my pocket," he whispered, "but play to the gallery if you can! A little vaudeville—the crowd loves it! Heroic stuff. That's it, take your time."

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GONELLI'S breath came fast. He said nothing, as if, with the priest's absolution, he had lost interest in old quarrels. His clothes were torn, his shirt was bloodstained, a lock of black hair hung over his forehead. Yet in the steady look he gave Pug there was a smoldering fire, just the flicker of jauntiness. And his face was sullen with pain. He managed to lean forward to the match Pug held for him. Then, without any provocation, there were tears in his eyes. He straightened, threw back his head, and gave Pug a proud look:

"For God's sake," he said, "let me die now—I'm tired."

A shaft of light fell aslant the courtyard, gilding the lifted rifle barrels, the drifting clouds of dust, the battered walls. Like a great gold coin the sun balanced on the horizon, and with a shock of color the whole world became a prism, dazzling, multifarious, beautiful.

Pug took Diego's pardon out of his pocket and tossed it to the drowsy officer. Then he put his arm around Gonelli's shoulder and steadied him.

"You poison the air you walk in," he said, "but I'll get you out of this."

Gonelli's legs were wabbling. The unexpected tears had washed streaks across his dusty face, blackened with sweat and blood. He swayed, steadied himself desperately, tried to put the cigarette in his mouth, failed, whispered: "Damn you!" and fell slowly forward on his knees.

The astonished officer shook his head.

"Excuse me, Signor Pug. I don't understand. This fellow is as good as dead. You would better let us finish him."

Pug shook his head. "Not now. Later, perhaps—if he doesn't behave."

He put his hands under Gonelli's arms and lifted him. Half carrying, half pushing the nationalist, he got him across the quadrangle, through the twisted passageways to the courtyard and into the streets, a crowd of officers and soldiers trailing behind.

A cab was waiting in the muddy piazza before the fortress. Pug put Gonelli aboard, climbed in beside him, and they drove toward the city, the cabby cracking his whip over the ambulating skeleton called, by courtesy, a horse. The nationalist was propped against Pug, as limp and flabby as a corpse.

"Is he dead, signore?" the cabby asked, politely.

"I hope not."

"Yesterday he was very much alive. His pockets were full of money and his mouth was full of pretty promises. What are you going to do with him, signore?"

"Hanged if I know."

The cabby rolled a cigarette with one deft twist of his free hand, stuck it in the corner of his mouth and shrugged his shoulders. The sun had climbed out of the sea. People were stirring in the streets. The market itself was ready for the usual breakfast gathering of official Magella. The long narrow room, with its immense mirrors and elaborate chandeliers, had been put in some sort of order after the destructive riots of two days before. Waiters were polishing the marble tables and a handful of royalist officers, released from guard duty, were gossiping in a corner. Pug steered the reeling, bloodstained, furious Gonelli to a table and ordered coffee. When it came Gonelli drank hurriedly, the cup trembling in his hands. Then with a perceptible effort he pulled himself together, glared at the astounded royalists, and whispered: "What's the game?"

Pug leaned back in his chair. "I had an idea you might like to fight on the right side."

"Your side?"

"Perhaps. You remember what a certain great man said about making the world safe for democracy? This corner of the globe isn't safe yet. Not by a long shot! You Magellans are stark, dumb crazy. And selfish. And blind! You go about stabbing each other in the back as a pastime. You're too proud to work for a living. You hire men to fight for you and to die for you. You're all caked with prejudices a thousand years old, superstitions handed down to you from the idol worshipers of antiquity. And some of you Italians and Spaniards who have come here in the last twenty years—are exploiting Magella for your own benefit."

"And you?" Gonelli asked.

"Perhaps the Fairchild Company has done that in the past. But I'm here to see that Magella has a square deal in the future."

Pug threw back his head. "There's something about this country worth living for, worth fighting for. Look at your saints, your poets, your statesmen! The graveyards are full of martyred priests and assassinated presidents. Waste! See here, Gonelli, it makes my blood boil to look at that magnificent, empty harbor out there and the leprous beggars on the cathedral steps. Some day Europe and America will know their way blindfolded into this port. And there aren't going to be any hired spies and howling anarchists. Can't you see it? Wide streets, shops with big plate-glass windows, theaters, hotels, automobiles, wonderful railways running back into the provinces, municipal docks along the water-front, big ships coming and going. Peace!"

For a moment Gonelli was silent. He stirred his coffee gently. Then he raised his eyes. "Signor Pug," he said, "all of my family were Garibaldini—they wore the red shirt and fought and died for liberty. I like to fight. Almost, I like to die. But not quite. You saved my life today, Rene! You crack the whip and I'll dance."

Pug shouted. "You're a man of talent, Gonelli. But I don't trust you around the corner."

"I am a visionary, Signor Pug, an idealist. You are a materialist with an inspired sense of the dramatic. We ought to get along very well together. I have no friends. When you defeated me the nationalists went to Diego. There isn't a confessed nationalist in Magella this morning. Every one is a royalist. Every one is watching you, not because you promise them reforms, but because you sit a horse like a plainsman, shoot straight, laugh when you're afraid and take what you want."

"Gonelli," Pug said, "you and I are fighting for the same thing. I came down here to protect the Fairchild mines and to put a railway into the Marias. You and your hired soldiers tried to block me. For patriotic reasons? As a matter of fact, Magella will benefit by the railway as she would never have benefitted by your brand of patriotism—anarchy, selfish ambition and disorder."

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GONELLI was not paying attention. He was staring beyond Pug with wide eyes, in which there was a sudden flash of terror. Pug turned quickly. A man was standing behind his chair—a small fellow with a dark-brown, lean face, black hair, a sharp nose and the sloping, muscular shoulders of a fighter.

"I thought you were dead," he said in Spanish.

"I am very much alive," Gonelli answered, "thanks to this gentleman."

"Ah!" The Spaniard turned and, half closing his little black eyes, examined Pug from head to foot. His fingers were covered with silver rings; he wore an elaborate flowered vest and a corduroy jacket. He blew a cloud of cigarette smoke into Pug's face, waved his hand, and asked:

"What will you take for your prisoner?"

"My prisoner?"

"I mean Gonelli. I have a quarrel with him. I thought it had been settled by the firing squad. You have interfered with destiny. If you will surrender him to me, I will spare you the trouble of dealing with a coward and a scoundrel."

Pug shook his head. "You are too kind. It is no trouble at all——"

"What are you going to do with him?"

"Is it any business of yours?"

The Spaniard's eyes bashed. He put his hand in his pocket and rattled some coins together. "Americans will sell anything—even their enemies. How much?"

Pug pushed back his chair and stood up. "How much to twist your nose, Joselito?"

The Spaniard smiled, shrugged his shoulders and answered, in a cool voice: "It would cost you a thousand dollars, Americano, and your peace of mind. I advise you not to do it." He bowed and went quickly out of the cafe, the big iron spurs at his heels clanking on the stone floor.

Pug whistled and turned to Gonelli. "Who is that comic opera brigand?"

"You crack the whip, Signor Pug. you see the lighted windows above the arcade. I can take you in, but I'm not sure that I can bring you out again. I count myself a dead man already."

Pug laughed. The band was playing the "Vespri Siciliani." People passed and repassed, gossiping softly. Great white moths fluttered in the light of the street lamps. And overhead the stars were quietly luminous, like fairy lanterns swung from the roof of the world.

They crossed the street and went for a short distance along a narrow alley. A light burned above a doorway, and beneath it, leaning against the wall, a disreputable fellow was keeping guard. A cigarette hung between his lips, his hands were thrust into his belt, and his bare feet were crossed in a pose of absolute indifference. When he saw Gonelli he straightened, tossed the cigarette into the butter, howled: "Before God, it is Carlo Gonelli!" and vanished as if an invisible hand had snatched him into space. They heard the soft patter of his feet until he had turned the corner into the Esplanade.

"Upstairs," Gonelli whispered briefly.

PUG LIFTED THE GIRL ABOVE HIS HEAD AND SWUNG HER UP ON THE BAR. THEN HE STOOD BESIDE HER, SNATCHED A GLASS OF NATIVE WINE—AND SMILED DOWN INTO THAT POOL OF UPTURNED FACES.

The cafe was crowded. A bar ran along one whole side of the long, narrow room. Behind it, shelves full of glittering glasses and bottles and two or three enormous mirrors were unbroken—the only bar in Magella to escape the revolutionary vandals. On a raised platform at the farther end of the room two boys were playing guitars. A crowd of men stood about a cleared space watching the dancers—tall plainsmen in gaudy ponchos, Neapolitans, the dregs of the foreign population, Chinese, spectacled Germans wearing pongee coats and dingy straw hats, the inevitable mozo, Indians, vaqueros, young rancheros whose enormous hats towered above the crowd, one or two soldiers, and the ragged remnants of Gonelli's hired nationalists.

A cloud of smoke hung under the ceiling. The air was close and fetid, like a whiff from some infernal furnace. There was an incessant clapping of hands, a loud, insistent shuffling of feet, a roar of voices singing the passionate refrain of the dance music.

Pug elbowed his way through the crowd. He had forgotten Gonelli. He stood on the rim of the dancing floor, looking for Cammarillo. He was not surprised at the crudeness of his feelings.

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HE was farther from 5th avenue than he had ever been. Civilization was ten thousand miles away, and he was standing elbow to elbow with the maddest adventurers left on the face of an enlightened globe. The very word liberty was flavored with folly. Progress went hand in hand with murder. There were no laws, only insane ideals, lofty intentions and flabby morality. Pug felt like a modern Don Quixote from Manhattan, tilting at shadows. These mad patriots would go on strangling, plundering and dying until some miracle made plain the insane futility of their struggle. Then, perhaps, Magella would be safe.

The music stopped; the dancers, panting and laughing, swept back against the watching crowd, and Pug saw a girl standing alone in the center of the cleared space. Her smooth hair was held in place by a gilt comb; she wore a shawl over her shoulders and a tight calico skirt. She stood motionless, her eyes on the crowd, smiling a slight, disdainful smile that was provoking and audacious.

"Querita," some one called, in a thick voice, "dance for us!"

The girl shrugged and looked over her shoulder at the guitar players. Then, slowly, with her hands on her hips, her eyes closed, and her lips parted, she began to dance. The guitars swept into frantic melody, the staring rancheros shouted, and there began again the thumping of feet and the clapping of many palms. Some one climbed up on the platform at the end of the room and smote the piano with a crash. Querita was dancing the tango—not the tango of the boulevards, nor of Broadway, nor of Michigan avenue—the tango of the South American dance hall. She was seductive, malicious, implacable. Slowly circling the crowd of eager men, she searched for a partner.

Gonelli whispered, touching Pug's arm: "Cammarillo is sitting over there with three other men—the table in the center. The little fellow in the straw hat. Now that you have seen him, let's get out of this——"

Pug shook his head. "You don't understand me, Gonelli. I never go home until the tables are stacked. I'm going to dance with Querita myself."

Querita had paused before Cammarillo. She said something to him in an ingratiating voice. Cammarillo, without paying the slightest attention to her, went on drinking and talking. The dancer's lips trembled. She stamped her foot, threw back her head, and said in a loud voice: "Cammarillo! Have you forgotten Querita?"

The Spaniard, after a slight pause, turned his head and let his eyes rest on the girl with an uncomprehending stare. The crowd was silent while Cammarillo and the dancer faced each other. Some one in the background laughed, there was a loud, sibilant hiss from the rest, and the amused onlookers held their breath before the little tragedy of Querita's failure. Cammarillo's eyes traveled from her head to her feet appraisingly; then he shrugged, frowned and turned his back.

For a moment the girl hesitated. She saw the look that flashed into the eyes of the crowd; she heard a murmur of laughter and mockery. Backing away from Cammarillo a step or two, on tip-toe, she stood rigid and furious. Then, snapping her fingers and stamping her foot, she began dancing again. Now, you see, I dance. In return for my miserable life I dance like a trained bear. That was Pedro Cammarillo."

"Who is he?"

"A wealthy landowner—half Spaniard, half Tapadas. He comes from behind the Christina. He is the leader of the nationalists."

"Good Lord!" Pug groaned, "are there two of you?"

"I fought Cammarillo's battles, Signor Pug. He could have raised an army of his own, but he preferred to let me risk my unimportant neck. I was—how do you say in English?—the goat!"

"Well," Pug demanded. "What next?"

Gonelli glanced around the cafe and lowered his voice. Pug saw that his hand was trembling. But the look he gave the American was steady enough. "The answer is simple. You are in control of the Fairchild mines. Diego is behind you. Cammarillo will form a new party, stage a revolution and destroy you if he can."

The defeated nationalist took a spluttering drink of coffee and said in a tense, passionate whisper: "I cry with you Viva la liberta! But Magella's fetters will have to be struck off one by one, Signor Pug, and the heaviest chain of all is Cammarillo."

Pug stretched his arms above his head and grinned happily. "Where does your fire-eating co-star hang out? I want to twist his nose."

"He will be at the Cafe Nazionale tonight. There is a girl who dances there——"

"We'll go!"

"Not I!" Gonelli answered in a sullen voice. "Cammarillo never shows tenderness to those who fail him. If I am caught I will be taken back to the plains and punished at Cammarillo's pleasure. Do you know what that means? Thirst, starvation, torture—No!"

Pug did not answer. He paid for the coffee, put the tottering, bloodstained nationalist into a cab, and drove to the American consulate, leaving the Cafe Albion paralyzed with curiosity. The consul's Indian boy helped him to get Gonelli into bed, and between they washed the wounds in his back and side that had been inflicted during the night by the zealous sword points of Diego's military examiners. Gonelli smoked a dozen cigarettes, shut his eyes, and said nothing. "I'm not dead, after all," he thought. He liked the beating of his own heart, steady, sure and vital—the heart that might have stopped with the coming of the sun. He liked the warm taste of tobacco in his mouth. When Pug and the Indian boy had gone, leaving him to the blessed luxury of clean sheets and deep pillows, he lay still, watching the thin slivers of sunlight between the closed blinds until they had faded into rose, into violet, into silver, into the complete blackness of night.

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PUG opened the door and looked at his enemy. He could see nothing of him, save the glowing tip of his cigarette, in the opaque and impenetrable darkness of the room.

"It's 8 o'clock," he said. "I've got some fresh clothes for you. Put them on. We're going to the Cafe Nazionale to twist Cammarillo's nose."

Gonelli groaned. "You're a tragic fool," he said.

"Dance!"

Pug lighted the old-fashioned kerosene lamp which stood on the dresser, and Gonelli, struggling stiffly to his feet, began slowly and painfully to dress.

Side by side they crossed the city to the Esplanade. The streets were still littered with broken glass. A ragged, bloodstained coat and an upturned sombrero were lying on the pedestal of San Martino's statue. But the band was playing in the open-air casino on the Esplanade and an endless procession of carriages circled the park—seedy cabs drawn by emaciated horses, old-fashtoned victorias boasting pairs of long-eared mules, rattletrap funeral hacks and an occasional brougham of respectable contour. The women rode; the men stared at them from the sidewalk. Pug saw powdered faces, brilliant eyes, shapely hands holding enormous black fans. Just for an instant he longed for 5th avenue, the crisp northern air, the shop windows, the frank eyes of his own people. Then he remembered the promise he had made his dad—"free Magella!" He snatched off his hat and grinned up at the stars. Magella and youth and a hard fight.——

Gonelli stared sidewise at his enemy. "Do you know where you're going, Signor Pug? The Cafe Nazionale is the meeting place of the anti-royalists. There it is—where

The cafe was crowded. A bar ran along one whole side of the long, narrow room. Behind it, shelves full of glittering glasses and bottles and two or three enormous mirrors were unbroken—the only bar in Magella to escape the revolutionary vandals. On a raised platform at the farther end of the room two boys were playing guitars. A crowd of men stood about a cleared space watching the dancers—tall plainsmen in gaudy ponchos, Neapolitans, the dregs of the foreign population, Chinese, spectacled Germans wearing pongee coats and dingy straw hats, the inevitable mozo, Indians, vaqueros, young rancheros whose enormous hats towered above the crowd, one or two soldiers, and the ragged remnants of Gonelli's hired nationalists.

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Pug elbowed his way through the crowd. He had forgotten Gonelli. He stood on the rim of the dancing floor, looking for Cammarillo. He was not surprised at the crudeness of his feelings.

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HE was farther from 5th avenue than he had ever been. Civilization was ten thousand miles away, and he was standing elbow to elbow with the maddest adventurers left on the face of an enlightened globe. The very word liberty was flavored with folly. Progress went hand in hand with murder. There were no laws, only insane ideals, lofty intentions and flabby morality. Pug felt like a modern Don Quixote from Manhattan, tilting at shadows. These mad patriots would go on strangling, plundering and dying until some miracle made plain the insane futility of their struggle. Then, perhaps, Magella would be safe.

The music stopped; the dancers, panting and laughing, swept back against the watching crowd, and Pug saw a girl standing alone in the center of the cleared space. Her smooth hair was held in place by a gilt comb; she wore a shawl over her shoulders and a tight calico skirt. She stood motionless, her eyes on the crowd, smiling a slight, disdainful smile that was provoking and audacious.

"Querita," some one called, in a thick voice, "dance for us!"

The girl shrugged and looked over her shoulder at the guitar players. Then, slowly, with her hands on her hips, her eyes closed, and her lips parted, she began to dance. The guitars swept into frantic melody, the staring rancheros shouted, and there began again the thumping of feet and the clapping of many palms. Some one climbed up on the platform at the end of the room and smote the piano with a crash. Querita was dancing the tango—not the tango of the boulevards, nor of Broadway, nor of Michigan avenue—the tango of the South American dance hall. She was seductive, malicious, implacable. Slowly circling the crowd of eager men, she searched for a partner.

Gonelli whispered, touching Pug's arm: "Cammarillo is sitting over there with three other men—the table in the center. The little fellow in the straw hat. Now that you have seen him, let's get out of this——"

Pug shook his head. "You don't understand me, Gonelli. I never go home until the tables are stacked. I'm going to dance with Querita myself."

Querita had paused before Cammarillo. She said something to him in an ingratiating voice. Cammarillo, without paying the slightest attention to her, went on drinking and talking. The dancer's lips trembled. She stamped her foot, threw back her head, and said in a loud voice: "Cammarillo! Have you forgotten Querita?"

The Spaniard, after a slight pause, turned his head and let his eyes rest on the girl with an uncomprehending stare. The crowd was silent while Cammarillo and the dancer faced each other. Some one in the background laughed, there was a loud, sibilant hiss from the rest, and the amused onlookers held their breath before the little tragedy of Querita's failure. Cammarillo's eyes traveled from her head to her feet appraisingly; then he shrugged, frowned and turned his back.

For a moment the girl hesitated. She saw the look that flashed into the eyes of the crowd; she heard a murmur of laughter and mockery. Backing away from Cammarillo a step or two, on tip-toe, she stood rigid and furious. Then, snapping her fingers and stamping her foot, she began dancing again. But tears were running down her cheeks and her breath came fast.

"May I cut in?"

Pug caught Querita as she passed and put his arm around her. He heard a shout of surprise, and the pushing, excited mob of nationalists surrounded him. Then a space was cleared again, and he found himself dancing with Cammarillo's girl.

And Cammarillo's girl could dance! She was as light as a feather fan. She was seductive and elusive, fiery and spiritual, dangerous and desirable. She was as light as a feather fan. She and the passion of Spain in her eyes. And the youth of Magella was in the smile she gave Pug—something fresh and buoyant and bubbling that went to his head like wine. He laughed and whispered to her: "Steady, Querita! Cammarillo will eat out of your hand before dawn." He heard the high, insistent tinkling of the guitars, the crashing piano. He clasped Querita and they whirled toward the nationalist leader like leaves spinning in a summer storm.

The crowd shouted—savage, jocular, amazed. Some one on the fringe of the perspiring, jostling people shrieked: "Signor Pug! Liberty! Freedom for Magella!"

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CAMMARILLO had risen. He pushed back his chair and with an impassive face stood watching the American. He looked what he was—a plainsman, half Indian, half Spaniard. He touched the imagination because he said nothing of his own sins. Neither did he boast. He knew the temper of his bandits to be as fluid as water and as elusive as quicksilver. He had promised them the Fairchild mines, and here, dancing with Querita, whom he had chosen to discipline, was the young American who had rubbed the nose of his right-hand man in the dust, had put Diego in control of the political switchboard, and had promised peace and material prosperity to Magella. Cammarillo's eyes narrowed as he watched the disgusting spectacle. But what he thought made no impression on the fixed immobility of his face.

Querita whispered suddenly: "Stop, America!" Her eyes fell before Cammarillo's stare, and Pug felt her body droop in his arms. "I am afraid." Pug laughed. He lifted the girl above his head, and, running through the crowd with a shout of triumph, swung her up on the bar. Then he stood beside her, snatched a glass of native wine from an unsteady Indian, and smiled down into that pool of upturned faces.

"Signori," he said. "I have the honor to salute you. Patriots. My name is Pug. New York. Have you got any teeth? Then I dare you to bite me!"

Cammarillo shouted, and his followers surged forward with a roar. Querita dropped behind the bar and crouched there with her hands over her ears. Pug ran along the polished marble counter, kicking glasses and bottles right and left, caught at an elaborate chandelier which hung from the low ceiling, swung there above the heads of the struggling crowd, then dropped. He fell on the shoulders of two gigantic vaqueros and knocked them down. But he rose again, laughing, and kicked his way to the platform with the whole roomful in pursuit. He tripped the two guitar players, sending them sprawling headlong, and spurn the pianist right about face with one violent twist. Then he vaulted the piano, and pushed it forward off the edge of the platform on top of a squirming heap of dazed nationalists.

He had no time to feel much of anything, but he knew that he was happy. He saw a spurt of flame, a puff of smoke. A bullet splattered against the wall behind him.

"Butterfingers!" he shouted.

He picked up one of the guitar players' chairs and smashed his way back to the bar. Then, reaching behind him to the loaded shelves, he seized bottles, glasses, bottles, and more glasses, and used the enraged faces below him as targets.

"It's fun while it lasts," he thought. "Why don't they get me."

Suddenly, with a completeness that was stifling, the lights went out. Pug heard groans, curses, sobbing, an insane scuffle of feet, the thump of bodies in desperate collision. He took a flying leap into the dark, became entangled with a dozen pairs of arms and legs, shook them off, and wriggled on his hands and knees to the door. "If it's locked——" he whispered. But it gave way and he found himself on the steep flight of narrow stairs that led to the street. There, leaning against the wall with his arms folded and his eyes closed, Pug found Carlo Gonelli. They raced together to the street. Behind them they heard a roar of voices, a staccato rattle of shots, the splintering of glass——

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THE Esplanade was quiet and dark. In the distance the municipal band was playing "Traviata." The air was sweet with the breath of the sea, the spicy fragrance of tropic flowers, the aromatic dust of old walls.

"Want a light, Signor Pug?" Gonelli asked in a gentle voice.

In the sputtering glare of the match their eyes met with suspicion, with humor, almost with appreciation. "Thanks," said Pug.

He stooped a little, lighted his cigarette with deep, satisfying puffs, then straightened, smiling in the dark. "It was a great evening, Gonelli. But who put out the lights?"

"How should I know?" Gonelli answered. "You crack the whip, and I dance. I dance like a fool, like a clown, like a monkey on a stick. But I can still say Viva la liberta!"

Then, side by side, in great good humor, they crossed the city to the consulate.

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A SLEEPY OFFICER GAVE A COMMAND IN A STIFLED VOICE AND ALL THE RIFLES WERE LIFTED WITH A PRECISE AND OMINOUS RATTLE. FACING THEM, CARLO GONELLI STOOD QUIETLY WAITING.

Fruit by Steamer.

BEFORE fast rail transport the family table was supplied with fresh fruits and vegetables only when such things were ripe in one's own neighborhood and crop loss there meant that no fruits and no vegetables could be had. Express trains, fast freights and refrigerator cars now carry fresh and perishable food from one side of the continent to the other, and a crop loss in one locality, though it means serious loss to the growers there and tends to raise prices to all consumers in that neighborhood, does not leave the table bare. The deficiency is met by bringing produce from other neighborhoods.

Transportation of fresh foods by ship is making progress and fruits and vegetables are being sent across the seas. American fruits from as far west as California are sold in the fruit shops of Europe and this trade is, perhaps, in its infancy. Fruits, especially Virginia apples, have found a wide market in Europe. In the fruit shops of Washington and other eastern cities pears, peaches and grapes from Africa are on sale in winter. Under present conditions such things are high and can be bought only by the rich or extravagant. There are signs, however, that refrigerator ships will some time bring fruits and vegetables from one side of the world to the other in such quantities that they will be low in price.

Recently a trial shipment of fruits, including melons, landed at New York from Chile, having come in the cold storage compartment of a regular passenger ship from the west coast of South America and through the Panama canal. The tomatoes, peaches, pears, melons and other things arrived in sound condition.

Last winter the New York Botanic Garden received a package containing a wild flower that blooms in the vicinity of Cape Town, South Africa. The plant was in bloom when it was shipped from Africa and the flowers were still fresh, bright and fragrant when they reached New York.

The growth of the tropical fruit trade is one of the marvels of food. Two or three generations ago oranges, limes, lemons and pineapples were so rare that they were sold only in "exclusive" grocery stores and were so costly that they were generally bought only for persons who were sick or feeble. The banana was rare. Until the great war came on these fruits were cheap and plentiful and no doubt when trade becomes normal fruits from the West Indies and Central America will again be cheap and abundant.